

Mus. 507 Proseminar in Music History
Spring 1999
Introduction to Popular Music Studies

Tuesdays, 1 - 4 p.m.
2322 Staller

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Office hours to be announced
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Introduction

In the last two decades Popular Music has come into its own as a field of scholarly investigation. Scholars from many different disciplines -- musicology, ethnomusicology, sociology, cultural studies, communication studies, etc. -- are investigating the popular music of our own and other cultures from a wide variety of viewpoints. The International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM), which was founded in the early 1980's, functions as an important conduit for communication among people working in this field. There are several scholarly journals devoted to the field, the most influential of which is the British journal *Popular Music*. Closer to home, a number of Stony Brook faculty are working in this area, and several of our doctoral students in music history are writing dissertations about popular music; you will have a chance to meet some of these people and hear about their work in this seminar.

Reading and Listening

The course is organized around weekly reading assignments, plus listening assignments consisting of music related to the reading. You will be expected to read between 20 and 100 pages a week. Some of this reading is quite challenging, and some of you who are not accustomed to reading scholarly academic prose, or for whom English is not a native language, may experience difficulty.

All readings will be from books or xeroxed copies of articles on reserve in the Music Library. If you wish, you may Xerox the readings to take them home, but please be considerate of your fellow students and *do not remove the books from the library*.

Course Work

We will meet once a week for 3 hours. The class will be a mixture of lecture and group discussion. Your work for the class will be:

- 1. Regular attendance** (see attendance policy below). (*10% of final grade*)
- 2. Informal in-class written assignments.** These may occur at any time during the class meeting -- beginning, middle, or end. They will serve to give you a chance to collect your own thoughts, to prepare for class discussion, and to help me get a feel for your understanding of what we are doing. I will collect and read them, but they will not be graded. (*5% of final grade*)

(course work, continued)

3. Weekly written assignments. In each of these assignments you will be asked to answer a set of questions about the week's reading and listening and related issues. These assignments will be the basis for each week's discussions, so they must be completed **before** the class in which the readings are discussed. *All assignments must be typed or printed. Handwritten assignments will not be accepted. (40% of final grade)*

4. The central focus of your work in this course will a **term paper**, which you are expected to be working on throughout the semester. You are asked to begin thinking about a topic immediately, and submit a description of your proposed topic on Feb. 9. A first draft of the paper is due on April 6, right after Spring Break. In the week following that (second week of April) each of you will meet individually with me to discuss your paper. The final draft is due on the last day of classes, May 4. Students who wish to may also give an oral presentation of their work on the last day. *(45% of final grade)*

Attendance Policy

This course is organized around the discussions and lectures in our weekly class meetings. There is no way of covering the material without attending the class. Therefore **CLASS ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY.**

NO unexcused absences will be allowed. Any unexcused absence will lower your final grade. If you are going to be absent, or if you have to arrive late or leave early, notify me in advance *IN WRITING*. If it is impossible to let me know in advance, notify me *IN WRITING* as soon as possible after the missed class. Your note should explain exactly why you have to miss the class.

Valid excuses include illness, transportation difficulties, and previous commitments for out-of-town concert dates, attendance at conferences, etc. ***Preparation for a recital or concert is NOT a valid excuse.*** In the "real world" you cannot suspend regular duties or commitments every time you have a concert coming up. The same realities apply in graduate school.

If you miss a class, you are responsible for the material covered in that class. This means that you must speak to someone in the class about what happened, review the material, and make up any missed in-class assignments. I will be glad to answer any questions you have during office hours, but please do not ask me to repeat my lectures for you during an office hour.

Late Work

Late work will be severely penalized. **Assignments are due at the beginning of class.** Assignments turned in any later than 1 p.m. on a Tuesday will be penalized a full grade point (An A will become a B). Assignments more than a week late will be penalized two full grade points. Assignments more than two weeks late will not be accepted. This applies to drafts of term papers as well as homework assignments.

Incompletes will not be given in this class, unless you have documentation of a medical emergency.

Disabilities

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact on your ability to carry out assigned course work, I would urge that you contact the staff in the Disabled Student Services office (DSS), room 133 Humanities, 632-6748/TDD. DSS will review your concerns and determine, with you, what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation of disability is confidential.

Syllabus, Spring 1999

Week	Topic, Reading and Listening	Assignments
1. Jan. 26	<p><u>What is Popular Music?</u> Listening: Tape 12060-1, Introductory Collage</p>	<p>In-class Writing #1 (Other in-class writing assignments will be given from time to time through the semester)</p>
2. Feb. 2	<p><u>Taste, Objectivity, and Popular Music Scholarship</u> Reading: William Brooks, "On Being Tasteless," <i>Popular Music</i>, vol. 2 (1991) p. 9-18</p>	<p>Assignment #1: "Music in My Life," Notes on Brooks and taste Bring music examples to class</p>
3. Feb. 9	<p><u>Adorno on Popular Music</u> Reading: Theodor W. Adorno "On Popular Music" in Frith & Goodwin, ed. <i>On Record</i> (1990) p. 301-314 Bernard Gendron "Theodor Adorno Meets the Cadillacs" in Modeleski, ed. <i>Studies in Entertainment</i> p. 18-36 Listening: Mus 507 Tape A - music by The Cadillacs and others</p>	<p>Assignment #2: Term Paper topic Notes on Adorno and Gendron</p>
4. Feb. 16	<p><u>Analysing Popular Music I</u> Reading: Robert Walser <i>Running With the Devil</i>, Introduction (p. ix-xvii), Ch. 2, "Beyond the Vocals: Toward the Analysis of Popular Musical Discourses" Ch. 3, "Eruptions: Heavy Metal Appropriations of Classical Virtuosity" (p. 26-107) Listening: Mus 507 Tape B - Heavy Metal examples</p>	<p>Assignment #3: Notes on Walser</p>
5. Feb. 23	<p><u>Analysing Popular Music II</u> Reading: David Brackett, <i>Interpreting Popular Music</i> Ch. 2, "Family Values in Music? Billie Holiday's and Bing Crosby's "I'll Be Seeing You" (p. 34-74) Listening: Mus 507 Tape C - Crosby & Holiday</p>	<p>Assignment #4 Notes on Brackett</p>

6. Mar. 2 Transcription
Reading:
Peter Winkler, "Writing Ghost Notes: The Poetics and Politics of Transcription" in Schwarz, Kassabian & Siegel, ed. *Keeping Score* p. 169-203
Listening:
Mus 507 Tape D - Aretha Franklin
7. Mar. 9 Technology
Reading:
Paul Théberge *Any Sound You Can Imagine*, Ch. 7 "Music/Technology/Practice: Musical Knowledge in Action" Ch. 8, "The New 'Sound' of Music: Technology and Changing Concepts of Music" (p. 157-213)
Listening:
Mus 507 Tape E - TBA
8. Mar. 16 Authenticity
Reading:
Richard Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity* Introduction (p. 3-11) Ch. 11, "Hank Williams as the Personification of Country Music", Ch. 12, "Creating a Field Called 'Country'" Ch. 13 "Authenticity: A Renewable Resource" (p. 173-220)
Listening:
Mus 507 Tape F - Hank Williams et al.
9. Mar 23 Femininity
Reading:
Susan McClary "Living to Tell: Madonna's Resurrection of the Fleshly" in *Feminine Endings*, p. 148-166
Listening:
Mus 507 Tape G - Madonna
- SPRING
BREAK**
10. Apr. 6 Black Masculinity and the White Hero
Guest: Krin Gabbard, department of Comparative Literature.
Reading: TBA
Listening: Bruce Springsteen, examples
Viewing: *The Bridges of Madison County*
11. Apr. 13 *No class -
individual conferences on term papers*
- Assignment #5
Transcription (example related to your term paper)
- Assignment #6
Notes on Théberge
- Assignment #7
Notes on Peterson
- Assignment #8
Notes on McClary
- First Draft of Term Paper Due

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| 12. Apr. 20 | <u>PhD Thesis in Progress: New Wave</u>
Guest: Theo Cateforis
Reading: TBA
Listening: TBA | Assignment #9
Notes on Gabbard and Cateforis |
| 13. Apr. 27 | <u>PhD Thesis in Progress: Industrial Music</u>
Guest: Jason Hanley
Reading: TBA
Listening: TBA | Assignment #10
Notes on Hanley |
| 14. May 4 | Class presentations:
Selected Term projects | Final Draft of Term Paper Due |